

TOP SECRET

29 MAR 1949

948

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

GENERAL

1. President advises Abdullah of US position--US Representative Stabler in Amman has been instructed to transmit a message from President Truman to King Abdullah of Transjordan concerning the attitude of the US toward territorial adjustments in Palestine. The President's message reiterates the US view that Israel should offer territorial compensation for any additions to its territory beyond the boundaries established in the UN resolution of 29 November 1948. After pointing out that the draft Israeli-Transjordan agreement stipulates that its provisions will not prejudice an ultimate political settlement between the parties, the message assures King Abdullah that the US would regard any attempt at a major break of the agreement as a serious obstacle to peace in Palestine and would be prepared to make strong representations to any party making such an attempt.

S/TS

FAR EAST

2. CHINA: Continued US aid held necessary--US Embassy Nanking expresses the view that Acting President Li Tsung-jen has won the respect and admiration of the majority of politically articulate Chinese as a result of his vigorous peace efforts. The Embassy points out, however, that economic deterioration in Nationalist China has continued at an accelerated pace and declares that if the US does not continue economic aid on the present scale for the next few months, Li will probably be forced to make an early capitulation to the Communists.

CIA/S

(CIA Comment: Li's political achievements of the past two months have been made possible by a lull in military operations and by widespread hopes in China for peace. Li's government, however, lacks the actual power to withstand renewed Communist military operations. CIA believes external assistance during the next few months on the present scale would not alter this situation.)

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Approved For Release 2007/02/07 : CIA-RDP78-01617A006000020077-6

Document No. 073

NO CHANGE in Class. 11

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Class. CHANGED TO: TS

17 APR 77

Date: 7 MAR 1978

By:

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A N N E X

PRELIMINARY APPRAISAL OF THE
MILITARY COUP IN SYRIA

Colonel Husni Zaim, Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army, seized control of the Syrian Government on 30 March. Although detailed information is lacking, Zaim and his ultra-nationalist followers will probably be able to consolidate their control over the Government and, by ruling with a strong hand, may be able to solve many of Syria's internal difficulties. Despite Zaim's nationalistic program, US-Syrian relations are not expected to deteriorate appreciably (Zaim is personally friendly toward the West). However, the coup will probably have certain adverse effects. It will check the scheduled Syrian-Israeli armistice talks; Zaim will unquestionably cite the decision of the previous government to enter into these negotiations as proof of that government's unfitness to remain in office. There will also be inevitable delays in the ratification of the agreement for the Trans-Arabian petroleum pipeline and the French-Syrian financial agreement. Moreover, the danger exists that the Syrian coup may provoke disturbances in other Arab states, particularly Iraq and Egypt. Neither of these countries is sufficiently stable politically to insure surviving a serious local outbreak.

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